

Coachella

SUBJECT:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

WATER RESOURCES BRANCH

December 17, 1908.

The Board of Geographic Names.
U. S. Geological Survey,
Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen:

In connection with a report that is now going through the hands of the Editorial Division on the Ground Waters of the Indio Region of California, Mr. McCormick, calls my attention to the fact that the term, "Coachella Valley", used throughout the text for that part of the desert that lies immediately northwest of the Salton Sea, does not appear on either map, and has not had the official sanction of your Board.

The conditions are about as follows: This northwestern end of the desert seems to have been called the Conchilla Valley, or Conchilla Desert on maps made before the settlement of the region. [This name had evidently been applied because the valley floor is strewn with myriads of fine shells deposited there at the time when the valley was occupied by a lake antecedent to the present salton Sea.] Settlement of the valley began four or five years ago. One of the stations of the Southern

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Pacific Railway was called Coachella. I do not know the origin of this term, but it is possible that it is a corruption of Conchilla. Whether or not that be true, the term Coachella, applied first to the station, and afterward to the entire valley about it, has become fixed in local usage, and can not now be displaced. It appears universally in current news literature, and should be recognized upon our maps. Our failure to recognize it means merely that our maps do not express conditions as they are. As a precedent, I can refer you to the map opposite page 6, Senate Document 246, Sixtieth Congress, First Session, where the name is applied as I wish to apply it on the maps accompanying our report.

Yours very truly,

W. C. Mendenhall

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